



Embracing Tension to Build Bridges of Understanding

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THE PROBLEM:

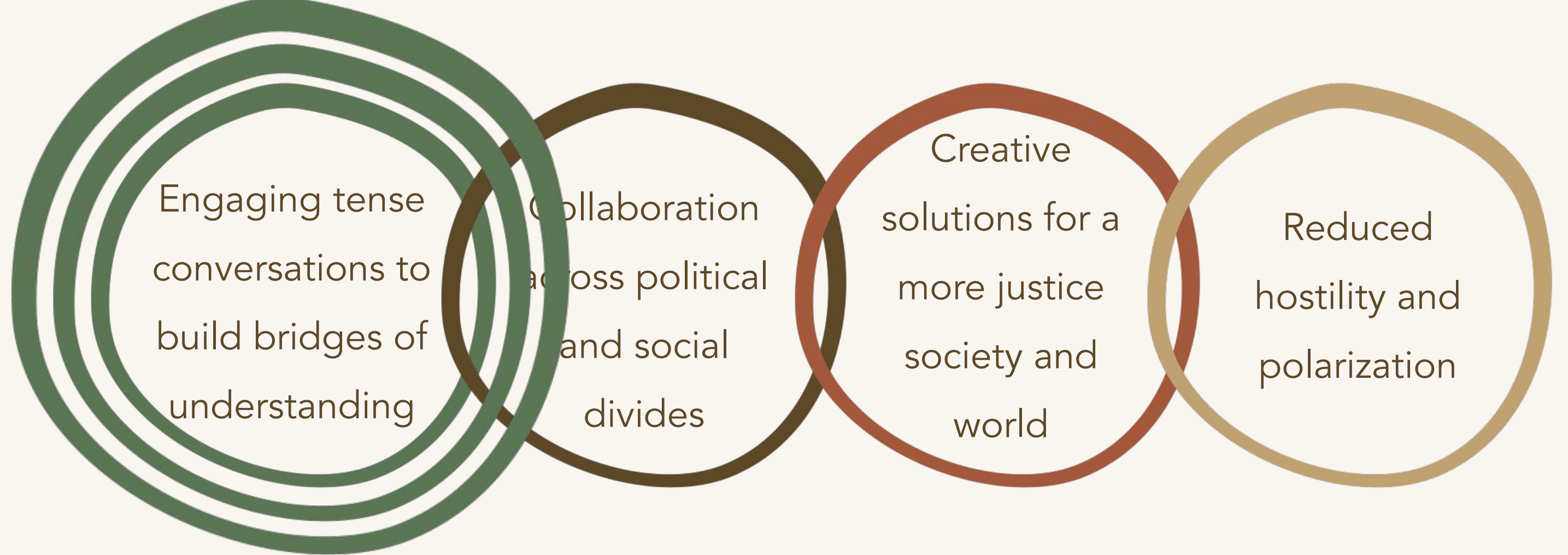
Polarization

Growing hostility
and political and
social polarization

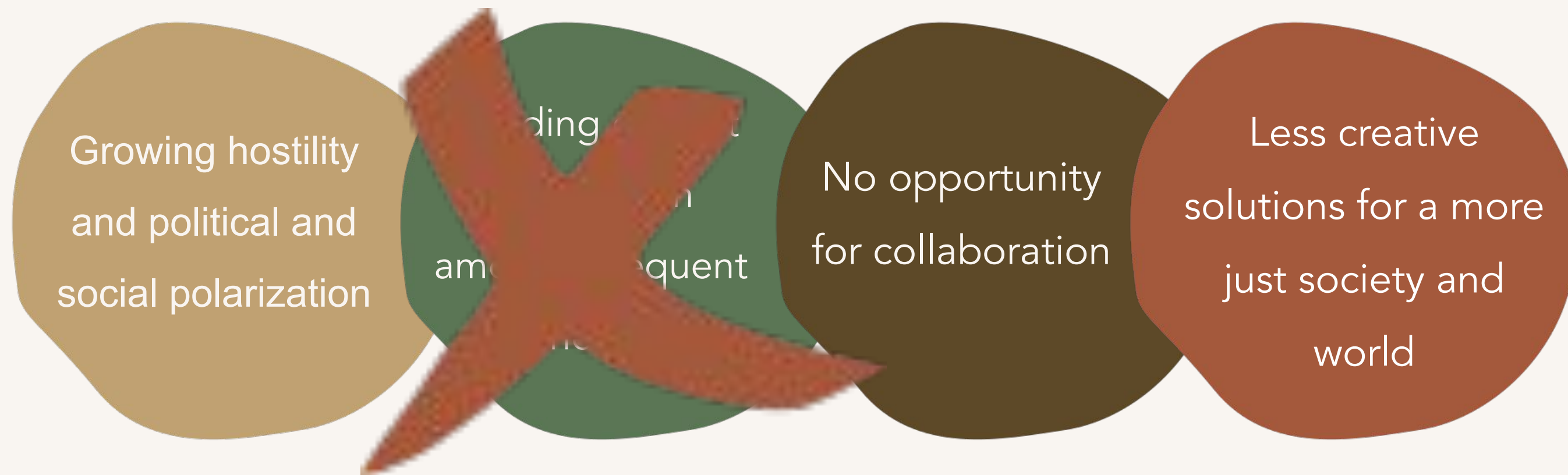
Avoiding conflict
and tension
amongst frequent
connections

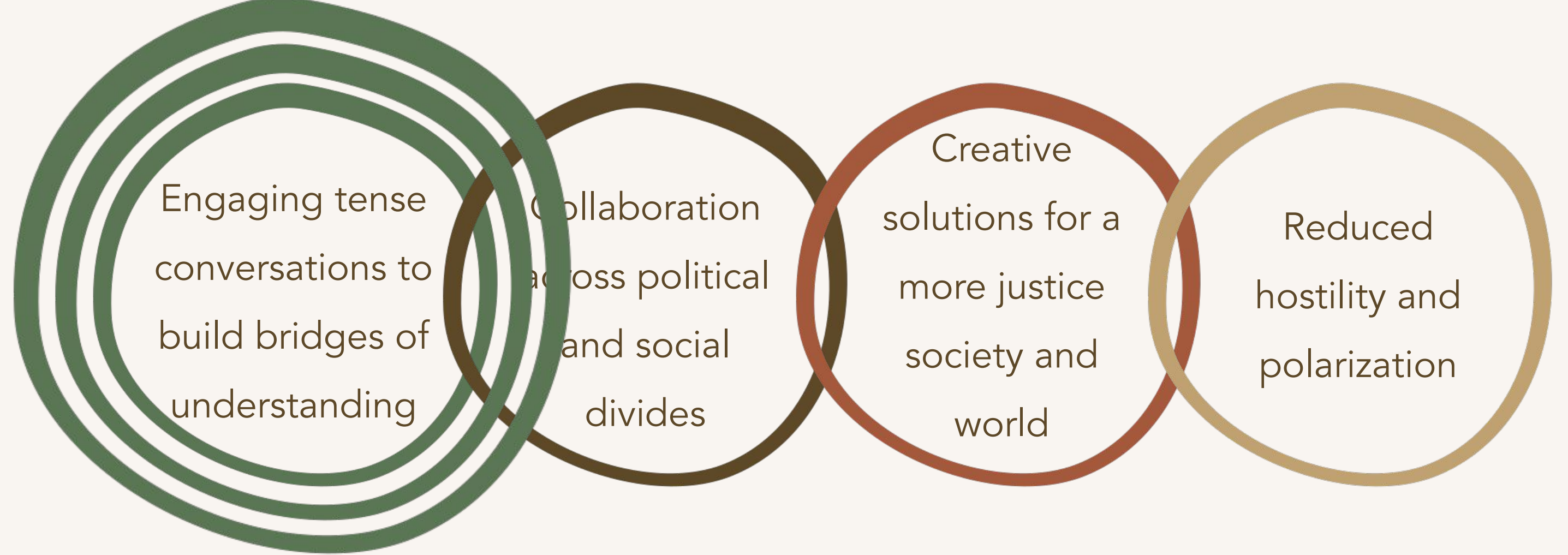
No opportunity
for collaboration

Less creative
solutions for a more
just society and
world



Disrupting the Cycle




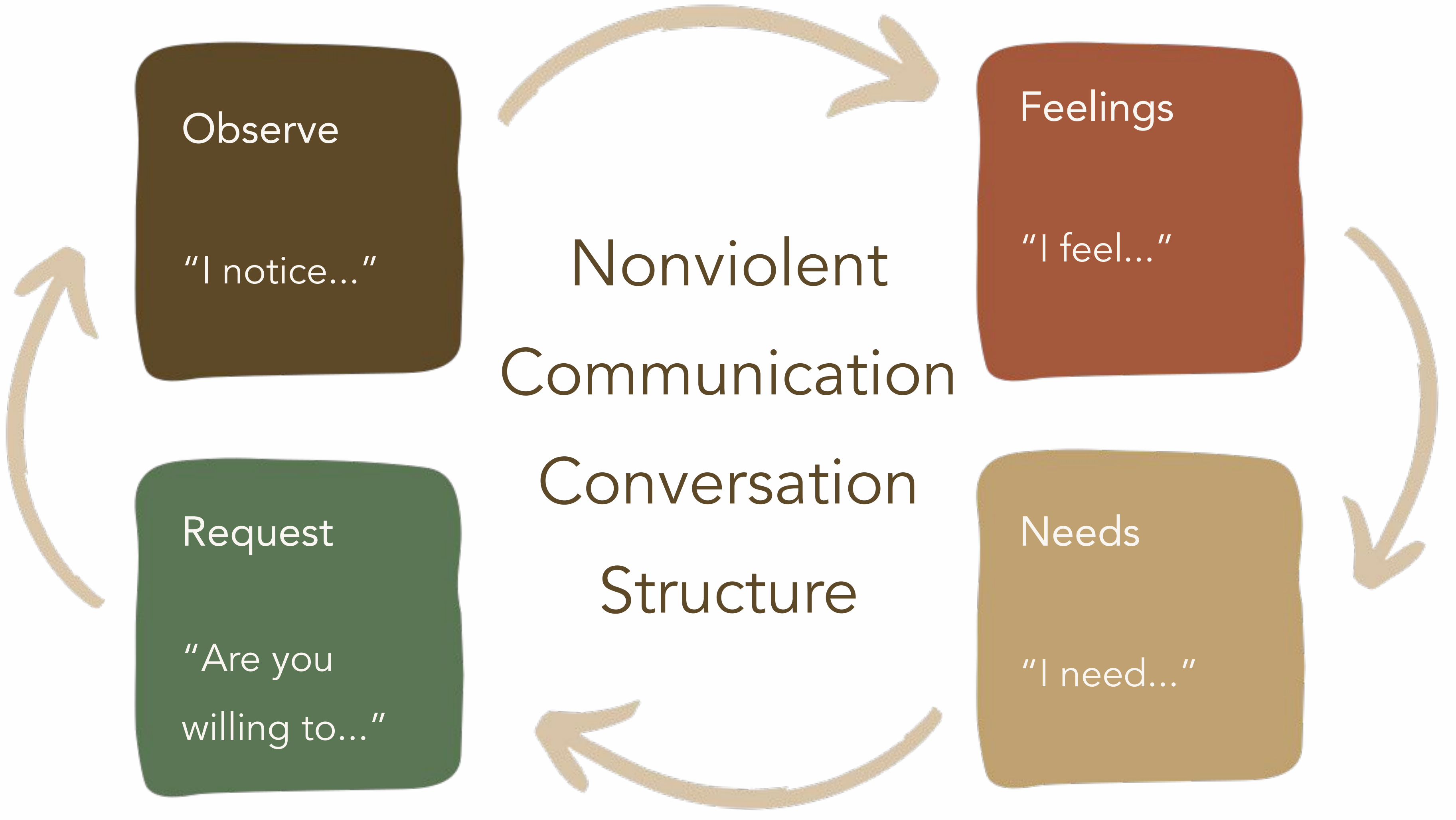


Disrupting the Cycle



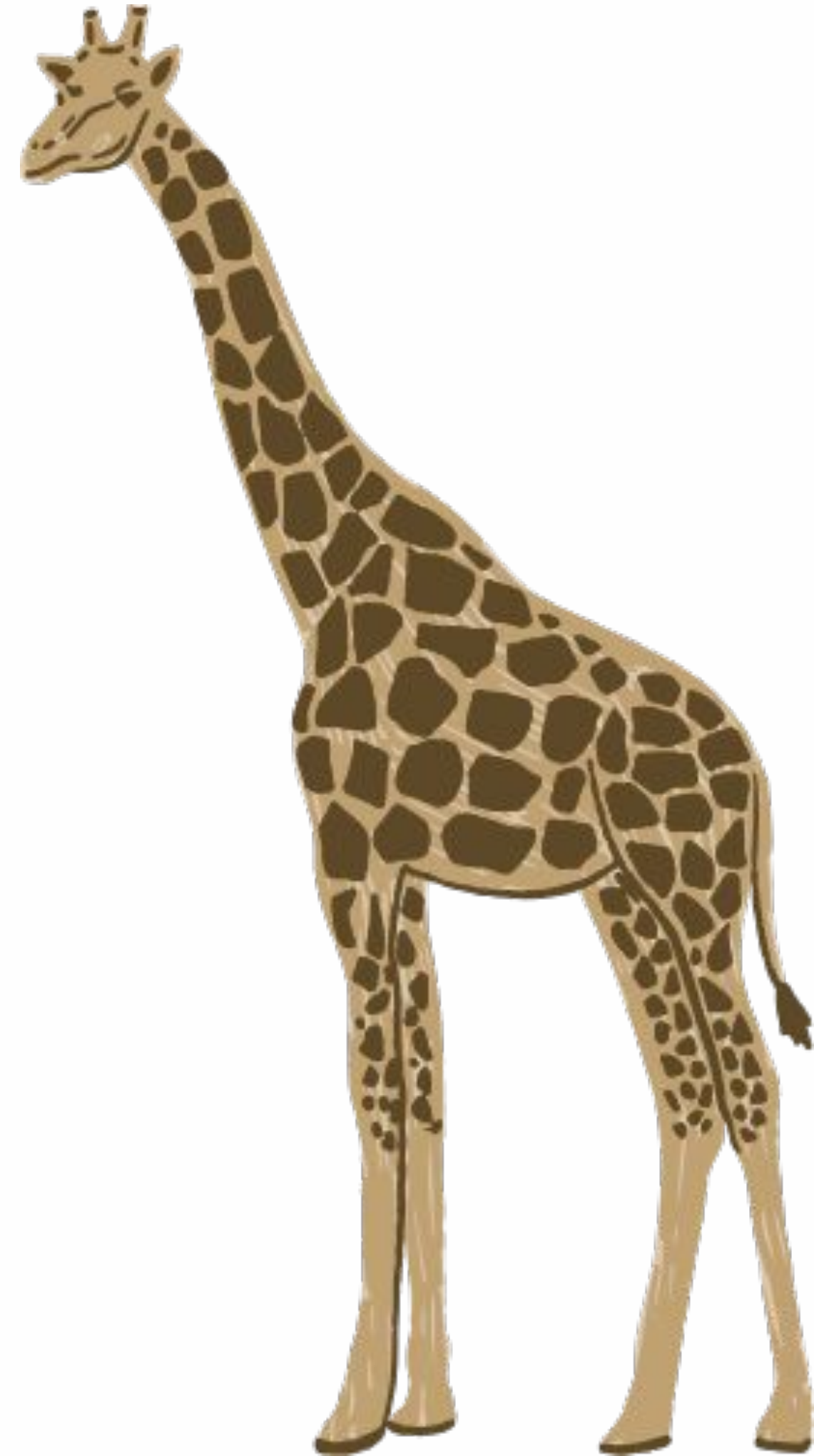
Channa. Dhammayiarta. Mindol Metta Karuna Reflection Centre, Siem Reap,

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- Best practices for conversations for building bridges
 - Engaging tense conversations
 - Reflection for continued growth



Nonviolent Communication

- Presence to conversation
- Attention to power dynamics
- Connection to values
- Language free of judgment
- Hearing the needs



Courageous Conversation

1. Engage
2. Speak your truth
3. Accept discomfort
4. Expect non-closure



Courageous Conversation

1. Engage

Focus
Storytelling

2. Sustain

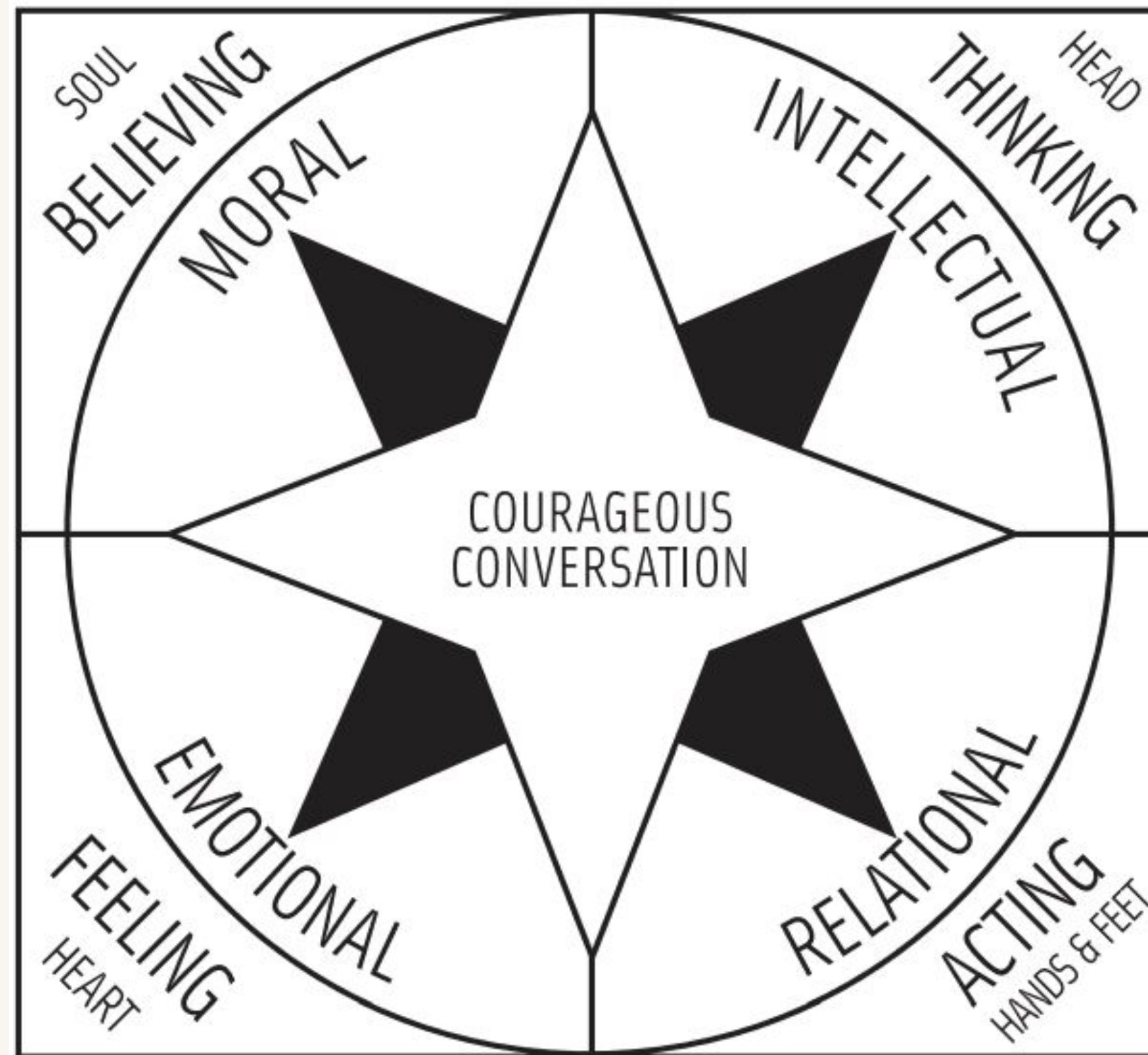
Balance
Monitoring

3. Deepen

Discomfort
Challenge



Courageous Conversation Compass



Singleton, G. E. (2021). Courageous conversations about race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools and Beyond.

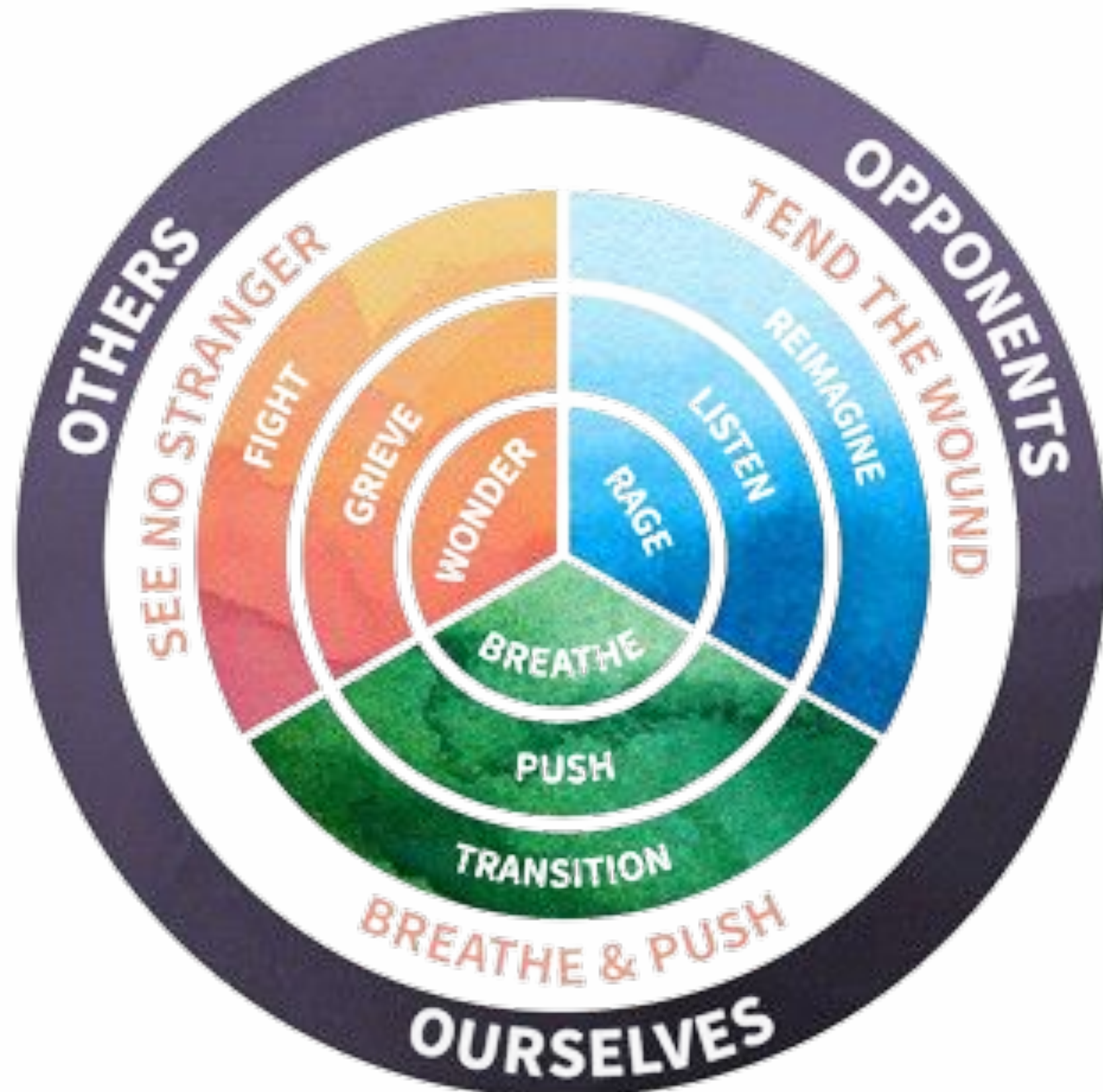
Corwin Press.

Courageous Conversation

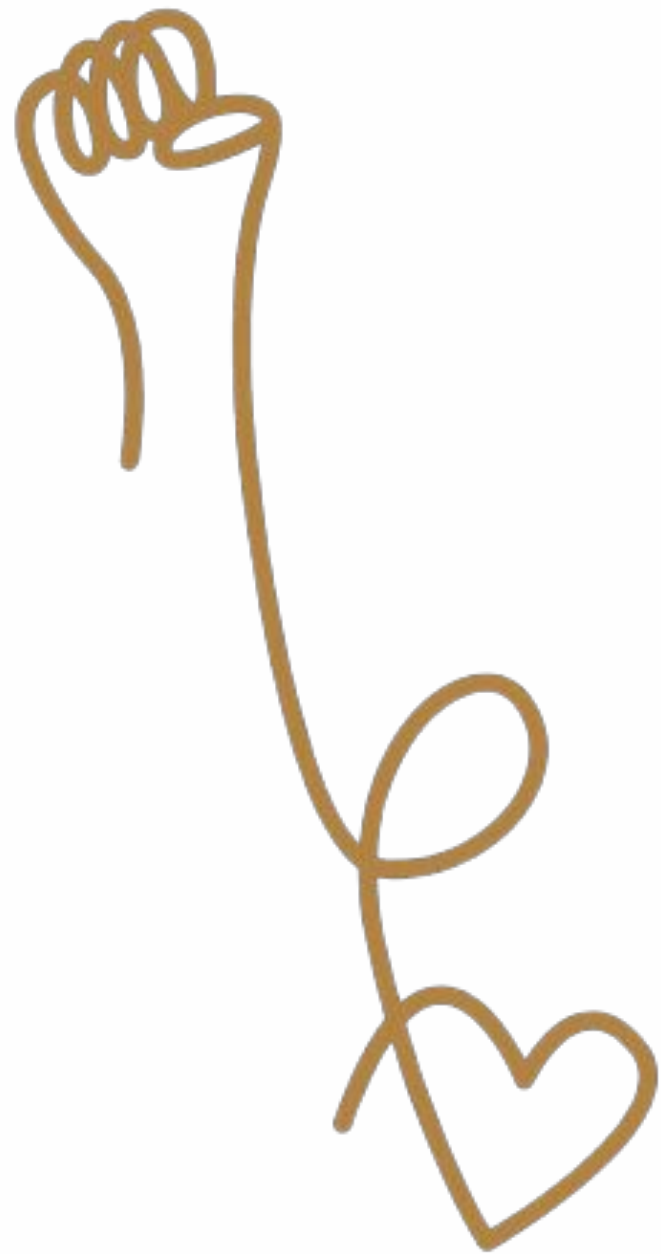


- Storytelling and truth-sharing
- Mindful questions
- Meeting people where they are
- Deepening and challenging own perspectives
- Expecting discomfort and non-closure

Revolutionary Love



Revolutionary Love



- Sense of wonder
- Divine rage
- Tending to wounds and fears
- Attend to power dynamics
- Pausing to breathe
- Pushing through challenges
- Transformation

The Spirit of Mercy

- Courage
- Faith and trust in the Divine
- Unity and charity
- Community and relationship





Embracing Tension to Build Bridges of Understanding Conversation Guide

Based on the wisdom and practices of Nonviolent Communication, Courageous Conversation, Revolutionary Love, and the Mercy World, this Conversation Guide is intended to prepare for potentially tense and polarizing conversations that come up in our everyday lives.

Before Conversation

- Strive for compassion based on our interdependence
- Recall the need for community and collaboration to cultivate a more just and equitable world
- Feel and process divine rage for the stories and issues you care about
- Enter the conversation with a sense of wonder and desire to understand others
- Expect discomfort and non-closure

During Conversation

- Consider the power dynamics and safety of the conversation
- Maintain mindful awareness and presence throughout the conversation
- Listen and communicate feelings, needs, and wounds
- Engage through the storytelling of your truth
- Ask mindful questions with curiosity and wonder
- Avoid judgments of right and wrong communicated through body language and words
- Meet others where they are
- Maintain the balance of sharing a variety of perspectives
- Build connection, community, and relationship with empathy, compassion, and love
- Allow others to challenge your perspectives
- Accept the discomfort and push through challenges

Conclusion of Conversation

- Accept non-closure
- Trust in the Divine
- Determine if the conversation can be revisited
- Pause and breathe to care for yourself
- Reflect on the conversation and allow transformation to occur
- Celebrate transformation while looking to the next place where conversations are needed



Embracing Tension to Build Bridges of Understanding Reflection Guide

Based on the wisdom and practices of Nonviolent Communication, Courageous Conversation, Revolutionary Love, and the Mercy World, this Reflection Guide is intended for reflection after tense conversations around polarizing topics that come up in our everyday lives.

Before Conversation

- How did I enter the conversation with a sense of wonder?
- How have I processed my divine rage to support me in the conversation?

During Conversation

- How did I attend to the power dynamic of the conversation and maintain safety emotionally and physically?
- How did I leave space or invite all to share and be heard?
- Did I ask mindful questions to maintain and engage the conversation?
- Did I maintain my presence and engagement in this conversation? Where did my attention drift?
- How did I share my feelings, needs, and wounds and the realities of injustice and oppression in my life experience?
- What stories of truth did I share to engage others?
- In what ways was I able to build relationship, community, and a sense of connection?
- What did I learn about the other's feelings, needs, and wounds?
- How can I be attentive to their feelings, needs, and wounds?
- What invitations did I hear to challenge my own perspectives or include in my work for justice?
- How can I reimagine justice and equity?
- How did I push through the challenges and discomfort of the conversation?
- Where did I find connection to my values and beliefs?

Now, After Conversation

- How can I let go of closure and trust the work of the Divine?
- Is this a conversation that I can or should revisit?
- Where did I feel divine rage? What can I do to process these feelings?

Overall, what went well?

How can I improve the next time I engage in a tense conversation?

Start Building Bridges

- Start small
- Practice
- Be kind to yourself
- Give time for reflection

Close Friends
or Family

People who
share some
values and
beliefs

Friends and
family that do
not share
beliefs

Authority figures
and leaders



Download the Conversation and
Reflection Guide



Thank you!

Questions?



References

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